A lot of information about Army training and operations is suitable for sharing with the public. Realizing that environmental noise is a growing public issue, the Army is trying to address concerns and provide answers to questions through a series of fact sheets (and other means). This fact sheet covers the most frequently asked questions about Army noise.

Frequently asked questions

Why do soldiers have to train at night?

Nighttime military operations over the modern battlefield are increasingly common. Fighting in the dark is possible, in part, with advancements in modern technology. Night vision goggles and other devices, for example, have become standard equipment on the battlefield. Soldiers need to practice using this technology under realistic conditions, so night fighting is an integral part of many training programs. To be effective, night training must occur when it is sufficiently dark, which necessitates later hours of operations during summer months, when sunset occurs after 8:30 p.m. Moreover, night vision goggle training requires moonlight, necessitating later night operations as pilots "chase the moon" between moonrise and moonset. Occasionally, such as when a unit is preparing for deployment, training activities will increase, including a higher number of scheduled night operations.

Why can't the Army use simulation technology for training?

In fact, the Army has been using simulation technology in training for several years. This simulation includes helicopter flight, tank gunnery, armored vehicle gunnery, and more. Even though simulation technology is used, it is not a substitute for actual hands-on firing of weapons. This can be experienced only during live-fire training provided at the installation.

What is the likelihood of an aircraft mishap?

The likelihood of an aircraft mishap is remote. Worldwide, only a small number of mishaps occur out of hundreds of thousands of military aircraft operations each year. An examination of military aircraft mishaps over the last 30 years indicates that a majority of the mishaps occurring within five miles of an airfield, on the airfield itself, or in the extended arrival and departure corridors close to the airfield. Accident potential zones (APZs) are areas in the vicinity of airfield runways where, if a problem developed, an aircraft mishap would likely occur. While the possibilities of an aircraft mishap are remote, the Army recommends land use within the APZs be minimal or low density to ensure maximum protection of public health and property. The development of APZs gives local planners a tool to promote development compatible with airfield operations.

How can I reduce noise in my house?

The building material used in most house structures will reduce outdoor noise 15–25 decibels (dB), depending on whether the windows are open or closed. Greater noise reduction may be achieved by caulking and filling exterior openings, installing sound-insulating windows and doors, and adding thermal insulation to outer walls and ceilings.

How will the children be affected if a school is located in a high noise zone?

In buildings without adequate sound protection, aircraft noise may impact how well school-age children learn. Noise reduction can help significantly. For example, while schools are normally considered incompatible with outside noise levels of 65–75 dB, sound-proofing the building can reduce the amount of noise reaching the students. Outside noise should be reduced to approximately 45 dB as it is measured in a classroom.

What are the adverse effects of noise exposure?

Noise affects people differently. Some people are easily affected by noise, while others are less so. Temporary hearing loss is possible in high noise areas, particularly if an individual is exposed for extended periods of time. However, permanent hearing loss is unlikely.

Will living in a noise zone affect the value of my property?

Property values are determined by a combination of neighborhood characteristics (e.g., the quality of local schools, local property taxes, access to transportation, and the crime rate) and individual housing characteristics (e.g., age of the house, number of rooms, and amenities such as garages). There are no definitive federal standards for quantifying the impact of noise on property values.

What is the Army doing to reduce the noise levels in the community?

All soldiers are held to high standards of professionalism and are required to comply with installation environmental procedures, including steps to reduce noise. Procedures used to reduce noise include changing aircraft flight routes and altitudes in noise-sensitive areas and limiting when and where noise-producing operations can occur. Night training is limited to those that are necessary and essential.

For more information about the Army's noise management program contact:

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This fact sheet is part of *Noise Management—A Primer on Facilitating Community Involvement and Communicating with the Public.* This guide, along with it's companion CD, can help you educate and engage stakeholders on and off your installation, and generate support for noise management activities.

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